

House National Security Committee

Subcommittee on Military Personnel

Steve Buyer, Chairman

PRESS RELEASE

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CHAIRMAN BUYER OUTLINES PLANS FOR CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT IN THE MILITARY

Chairman of the House National Security Committee Subcommittee on Military Personnel, Steve Buyer (R-IN), issued the following statement regarding the subcommittee's oversight efforts relating to recent allegations of sexual misconduct in the U.S. military:

"In response to tremendous Congressional concern over the recent allegations of sexual misconduct in the U.S. military, Speaker Newt Gingrich has tasked the House National Security Committee, the committee with principal jurisdiction over the Department of Defense, to lead Congress' efforts to ensure that such misconduct is fully investigated and all appropriate actions to prevent future abuse are taken. Chairman Spence has asked me, as chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, and Tillie Fowler as one of the senior-most women on the committee, to lead the committee's efforts on this very important matter. Representative Ron Dellums, the committee's ranking member, has asked Jane Harman to assist us in our endeavor. In that capacity, we have begun a bi-partisan, systematic, and thorough effort to understand the causes and contributing factors that led to the events at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, as well as at other training centers. It is an ongoing effort that will examine each of the military services, not just the Army. The focus of our investigation will be the issues of sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and fraternization.

"The approach we plan to take is different from many Congressional investigative efforts. This effort will be based on the direct and personal involvement of Congressional Members.

We have made an important commitment to actually gaining a better understanding of the issue by seeing and hearing first-hand what people have to tell us.

“A critical element to our understanding of the complexity of the issue is to actually visit with commanders, senior enlisted members, drill sergeants and trainees at the services’ training sites. As a result, our initial efforts will be centered around the concept of oversight by direct listening and observation. Specifically, we plan to visit the major training centers of each of the services – the Navy’s Great Lakes Training Center, the Air Force Training Center at Lackland AFB, Texas, one of the Marine Corps recruit training centers (Parris Island or San Diego), and Army training bases. In fact, later this afternoon, we depart for Ft. Leonard Wood, a basic training center and drill instructor training facility for the Army.

“During our fact-finding phase, we will also hold member-level briefings on various aspects of the issue, including the Department’s periodic sexual harassment surveys and legal options for enforcing the services’ sexual misconduct policies, and will meet with outside experts on sexual misconduct, sexual harassment and fraternization.

“After we’ve concluded our visits and gained a first-hand understanding of the actual issues and problems that need to be addressed we will hold Congressional oversight hearings on the issue. We believe this deliberate and methodical approach will make us far more prepared to evaluate the services’ sexual misconduct prevention efforts and to gain an understanding to ensure the military is taking the most appropriate steps for dealing with this complex and serious matter.

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